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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Poland

SUBJECT

The "Permanent Crisis  
in the Polish Construction Industry/  
System/ Type of Labor Organization/ Wage

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1. [redacted] construction industry in Poland [redacted] through  
December 1952.

Permanent "Crisis" in the Construction Industry

2. "The Polish construction industry is in a state of permanent crisis--for several  
main reasons:

- (a) Irrational organization and bad distribution.
- (b) The jobs of managers and foremen have been given to unqualified persons  
chosen for political, not professional, reasons.
- (c) The manual workers do not try to do an honest job; they don't think of  
the quality of their work. Paid on a piecework basis, they think only  
of quantity--how to increase a modest income. Every three months the wages  
are increased. This means more work to earn the same wage.

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2.

- (d) Inadequate living conditions which result in a great turnover of the skilled, or better workers. A manual worker in the construction industry has no 'work order' (nakaz pracy). This means he may leave his job on 14 days' notice. Engineers and technical personnel, however, are under the law of plynosc kader. This means they may not give notice without special permission.

The housing conditions for state construction workers are very bad; so is their food. The various enterprises build hostels for their workers as they move from construction site to construction site. The hostels are primitive barracks. According to the Trade Unions General Agreement every worker is entitled to 12 sq meters of living space. This agreement is never observed, and the hostels are overcrowded. Although the hostels are meant for transients, a worker may find himself living in one a year or more because the construction plans are never fulfilled on time. The hostels have no canteens. The workers must eat in restaurants. If a large project is underway in a small town, real shortages develop. This happened in Zydowce in 1952. The restaurants could cater to 50 additional persons at the most. Those who came to dinner at 5 pm got it; those who came later went without. After 3 pm the shops and bakeries had no bread. The workers had to bring their own lunch--bread and lard. Workers recruited from rural districts are better nourished because they get food parcels from their families.

#### State Organization

3. "Plans for the construction industry are drawn up with more emphasis on finances than on actual conditions. The Panstwowa Komisja Planowania Gospodarczego /The National Economic Planning Commission / gives out yearly construction plans to the Ministerstwo Budownictwa Przemyslowego i Mieszkaniowego /Ministry of Industrial and Housing Construction/ which in turn gives orders to the individual Zjednoczenia Budownictwa /Construction Unions / to build a certain building. The various zjednoczenia Budownictwa are dependent on the various government departments for whom they perform commissions.

#### Wroclaw Construction Department

4. "From 1948 to 1951 I worked for the Wroclawskie Zjednoczenie Budownictwa /Wroclaw Construction Union/ which belonged at first to the Department Budownictwa Przemyslowego and was then transferred to the Ministerstwo Budownictwa Przemyslowego. The central office was at Ulica Swierczewskiego 43, Wroclaw. The enterprise had a monopoly on all industrial construction in Lower Silesia. During the period 1948-51 it was building factories and workers' housing. It employed about 200 persons on the office staff and about 5,000 workers in the field. It had four sections (zarzady): Zarzad Budowlany 1; 2; 3 (for electrical work); and Zarzad Budowli Instalacyjnych 4..
5. "Lower Silesia had no private building enterprises during that period. Small enterpriser which did not employ more than 10 workers were permitted, but they could only undertake current repairs. Eventually the authorities began to liquidate even these small enterprises.
6. "The war damage in Lower Silesia has been removed and buildings have been reconstructed to a limited degree. Official 'representation' /sic/ buildings had priority. Workers' barracks came next. During the 1948-51 period only four or five large workers' apartment houses were being built in Wroclaw. Residential houses came third. Only a small number of private homes have been rebuilt. During the German occupation the city of Wroclaw had 300,000 inhabitants. It now has about 250,000. The shortage of flats is terrific. People are ready to pay 5,000 zl in bribes for a two-three room flat. To get an assignment to a flat it is necessary to bribe the officials in the city's real estate management.

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### Jelenia Gora Construction Department

7. [redacted] the Jeleniogorskie Zjednoczenie Budownictwa Miejskiego /Jelenia Gora Housing Construction Union/. [redacted] construction of about ten workers' multiple houses (each containing eight to 12 one-room flats) for the uranium mines at Jelenia Gora. These mines are on the railroad line between Jelenia Gora and Karpacz, at Kowale and Krzyzatka. In May 1951 the building tempo suddenly slackened because the Soviet authorities discovered that the uranium mines on the Czech side of the border were much more profitable.

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### Poznan Construction Department

8. [redacted] construction firm [redacted] Poznanski Zjednoczenie Instalacji Przemyslowych /Poznan Union of Industrial Installations/. [redacted] enlargement of an artificial silk factory at Szczecin-Zydowce. This factory had been started by the Germans. It was operating in three shifts, producing exclusively for export. Its technical equipment and machines had been imported from Germany. [redacted] on construction at the fishing base in Swinoujscie.

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### Wage System and Abuses

9. "Technical construction personnel (foremen and engineers) earn basic salaries plus premia for surpassing the plan."

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10. "Simple manual construction workers belong to various wage categories dependent on the type of work they do and are paid by the piecework system. They receive no premia. Group No. 3 was the lowest, paying a base wage of 1.86 zl per hour; Group No 5 earned 2.61 zl per hour; Group No 7 earned 2.93 zl per hour. To do his quota of piecework and achieve the plan a worker must usually work 10 hours a day.

11. "In evolving the plans and quotas, one building hour in industrial construction has a higher value than one building hour in dwelling construction. One building hour on an industrial construction was calculated at .37 zloty.

12. "The technical staff and foremen of a project are responsible for the fulfillment of a plan; if it is not fulfilled they earn only their basic wage--no premia. This system explains the general cheating that goes on in every Zjednoczenie when statistics and reports are prepared. It explains the quick, careless work that has led to shoddy constructions. It may be said without exaggeration that 70% of the state construction work has been inferior. In September 1952, therefore, Regulation (okolnik) 123 appeared. This makes the technical and administrative personnel responsible for the quality of work they execute or accept from their workers and makes the technical foremen personally and financially responsible for the work delivered. If large damages are discovered the technical personnel may be imprisoned."

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This regulation has made technical personnel more careful and their incomes have diminished with the slower work tempo.

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13. [redacted] no signs of deliberate sabotage on any of the construction projects [redacted] One may speak of the unconscious sabotage caused by the shoddy work to which the worker is forced by the plan-premium system. The carelessness of work combined with the new law of personal responsibility has turned the profession of a construction technician foreman or engineer into a dangerous profession. For example, new Zjednoczenie was established in Lublin in 1951 to build factories and airports. As the responsible personnel were afraid of getting into trouble because of careless work, the tempo was slow; after six months they had spent 10 million zl more than the plan permitted. More than 10 men were arrested.

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14. "More confusion occurs because of the shortage of building materials and especially of such equipment as lifts, concrete mixers (betoniarki), furnaces (podgrzewacze) and concrete. There are frequent changes in construction priorities. For instance, in the winter 1952-53 the Ministry of Mines (Ministerstwo Przemysłu Węglowego) became suddenly privileged. The work for other government departments got pushed into the background--more planning chaos.
15. "As in all Polish enterprises, the construction Zjednoczenia just participate in socialist competitions. The Poznan Zjednoczenie competes, for example, with the Wrocław. All sorts of slogans are used, eg:  
'Diminish the output of rejects'---- 'Zmniejszyc brakrobotwo'  
'Reduce accidents 50%'  
'Reduce empty transports'---- 'Pustych biegów w transporcie'  
The slogans and competitions are voted at mass meetings within an enterprise. The Party and Trade Union representatives get some trusted worker to move the resolution. Everybody forgets about it until the end of the competition is near. Then the construction enterprise starts working hastily on graphs and statistics, cheats as much as possible, and sends the results to its central office. There the report is again corrected. By the time it reaches the central construction bureau the cheating (naciąganie) has attained astronomical proportions. Such procedures have several times provoked criticism from higher Party authorities. Milary Mins [a deputy minister] has spoken of the 'differences between reports and the factual execution of the real plan'.
16. "Safety is poor in the entire construction industry. Accidents occur much more frequently than prior to World War II. The scaffoldings and barriers are erected too rapidly and carelessly.

Type of Labor

17. Most skilled construction workers today are unqualified. They lack a good pre-World War II training. Their education and vocational training has been too hasty. The unskilled workers (sily pomocnicze) are drawn mostly from the villages, as wages in the construction industry are a little better than those in most other branches of light industry (przemysł lekki). Most construction workers are aged 22-24, but they range from 16 up.
18. [ ] no Soviet supervisors or engineers on any of the construction projects [ ]
- Imports from Soviet Zone of Germany
19. "The bulk of the heating installations (urządzenia nagrzewcze) for the projects [ ] came from the Soviet Zone of Germany."

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